

Finding A Job With Skills You Already Have

Everyone has skills. In fact, everyone has hundreds of skills, and each one can be related in some way to one or more occupations. Without ever having had a job, without ever having been trained for a job, you are qualified to perform literally hundreds of types of jobs. Even if in today's economy you have seen your job down-sized or eliminated, you have many valuable transferable skills that will be needed in your next job.

Many people, however, are not aware of their skills and when asked in a job interview about their skills and experience have little or nothing to say. Some people hesitate to write a résumé because they do not know how to define their vocational and transferable skills.

How can you avoid that situation? How can you tell an employer you have the skills for a particular job when you've never done that job before? To be a successful job hunter, you must be able to tell employers, clearly and in detail, what you can do.

A systematic analysis of your skills should precede any communication with employers. Résumés, job applications, and job interviews will

be more effective if you have done a thorough skills analysis first. Get to know yourself by taking a personal inventory. Skills gained from volunteer work, hobbies, education, and other life experiences should be examined in addition to those skills gained from paid work.

List your jobs, hobbies, and interests. Start by listing every job you have ever held - full-time and part-time jobs, as well as paid and unpaid jobs. List the skills you acquired in each job.

What skills did you acquire as a 12-year-old newspaper carrier? Think about it. You accepted delivery of stock items (newspapers); you planned your route and delivered papers according to the desires of your customers; you collected money, made change, and kept records of cash transactions; and you probably expanded your route by getting new customers. In a limited way, you were a combination stock clerk, delivery and route driver, cashier, bookkeeper, and salesperson.



Next, list all of your hobbies and interests. Do you sew, knit, fix your own car, operate a CB or Ham radio, refinish furniture, plant and tend a garden, build models, raise animals, play computer or video games, paint, coach sports teams, or work as a hospital volunteer? Do you like hunting and fishing, photography, diving, camping and hiking, downhill or cross-country skiing, or motorcycling? Have you ever participated in fund-raising for a group, or in church-related activities? Have you ever led a social group or sold things as part of an activity? Have you recruited members for a group?

Each of those activities can be related to one or more jobs. What does playing video games have to do with work? Well, you gain eye-hand coordination, you reason, and you make quick decisions. Those abilities can be related to many different jobs.

Find jobs that match your skills: After you have compiled a list of your past jobs, hobbies, and interests, and have

listed several skills you acquired for each one, you should have several pages of information about yourself. Are you surprised at what you see? Take this process one step further and list as many jobs as you can in which you could use one or more of your skills.

Visit your local NHES Resource Center.

If you have trouble identifying jobs that match your skills, the staff at the thirteen local NHES Resource Centers is available to help you.

Once you have an idea of what you can do, you have to narrow it down to what you want to do. What type of work do you want to be doing in five years? What jobs will lead you to that type of work? Do these jobs pay enough to satisfy your economic needs? Will you enjoy doing these jobs and will you have a sense of accomplishment at the end of the work day? The staff at the NHES Resource Centers will provide labor market projections for the jobs that interest you, as well as explain such things as apprenticeship and certification, or licensing programs within New Hampshire.

You may also register for work with the Resource Center. Through a computerized job matching service, you may find the perfect job for you. If you are willing to relocate, you may search for work in any area of the United States through America's Job Bank and/or enter your résumé in the Talent Bank which is available to employers nationwide.

Adapted from: Connecticut DOL, LMI for Students, <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/progsupt/jobsvce/skills.htm#categories>

Assess Your Skills

Use this **Skills Inventory Worksheet** to help you build a resume and help prepare you to discuss your qualifications at job interviews. You take a skills inventory by making a list of your strengths and experience.

Besides helping build a resume, it will also help you with your confidence. Memorize it - so you can talk freely about your past accomplishments in an interview. Tack it on a wall. Is it more impressive than you expected? You do have a lot of skills and qualifications to offer an employer! This list will help you focus on certain jobs where your skills can be best used.

Skills Inventory Worksheet

What job experience do you have?

What special skills do you have?

What are your personal strengths? (Ask three friends or family members to truthfully list your best characteristics.)

Any volunteer work?

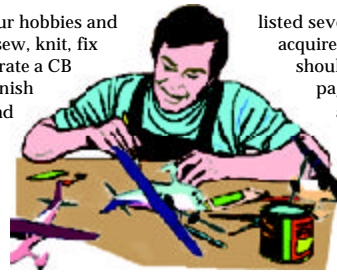
Military experience?

Education

Degrees (when and from where):

GED _____
 High school _____
 After high school _____
 College _____
 Outstanding subjects _____
 Honors _____
 Activities in school _____

Source: Adapted from Indiana Dept of Workforce Development website <http://www.state.in.us/dwd/assess.shtm>



Here's More on More Careers

New careers are emerging all the time. You will want to continue exploring your options or you could get left behind.

- Ask your guidance counselor/advisor about resources like books and computer programs/websites.
- Use reference materials at your local public library.
- A publication called *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (OOH) can be found at the library and sometimes in the guidance office.
- Talk with your parents (and your friend's parents) about their work experiences; ask them what do actually do in their jobs and how they chose their careers.
- Visit workplaces and meet people in careers that interest you. Take a tour of a company, conduct an informational interview, volunteer, or job shadow.

Source: Directions publication, Indiana Career and Postsecondary Advancement Center